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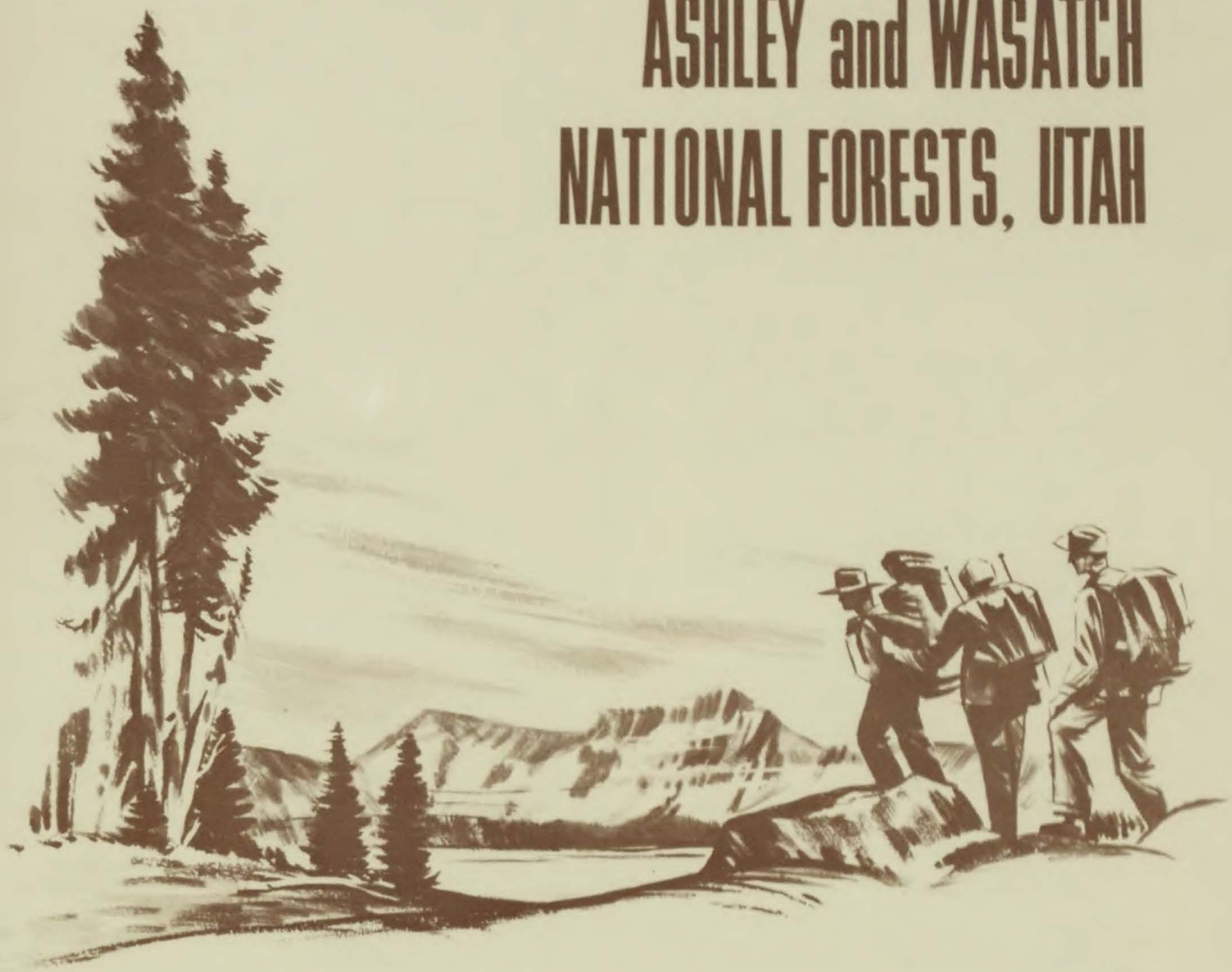
A proposal

HIGH UINTAS WILDERNESS

ASHLEY and WASATCH NATIONAL FORESTS, UTAH



U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE - FOREST SERVICE
INTERMOUNTAIN REGION
OGDEN, UTAH

FORWARD

This is a summary of a study conducted by the Forest Service of the High Uintas Primitive Area and surrounding National Forest lands. The study and the resulting proposal were made in accordance with the Wilderness Act of September 3, 1964 (Public Law 88-577). This Act directs the Secretary of Agriculture to review areas presently classified as "Primitive," determine their suitability for preservation as "Wilderness," and report such finding with recommendations to the President, who in turn will submit recommendations to Congress.

Before submitting recommendations to the President, the Secretary of Agriculture is required to give public notice of the proposed action and schedule a hearing in a convenient location near the proposed wilderness. This brochure provides public notice of the study and proposed action. The public hearing will be held in Salt Lake City on October 12, 1966.

PROPOSAL SUMMARY

This proposal recommends several additions and deletions to the existing primitive area.

GENERAL

The Forest Service recommends that 322,998 acres located in the High Uintas Mountains in the Ashley and Wasatch National Forests be designated as the "High Uintas Wilderness" and managed by the Forest Service to protect and preserve its wilderness character as provided by the Secretary of Agriculture's regulations and the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Additions

Add 121,613 acres not in the existing 237,177-acre High Uintas Primitive Area. (See map, Page 6.) Additions include the following four areas which are predominantly valuable as wilderness and are typical of the High Uinta Mountains:

Area A — 5,011 acres in the headwater of Henrys Forks, East Fork of Smiths Fork, and Little East Fork of Blacks Fork.

Area B — 1,573 acres in East Fork of Blacks Fork.

Area C — 13,018 acres in West Fork of Blacks Fork, Left Hand, Right Hand, and Stillwater Forks of Bear River.

Area D — 102,011 acres in the upper Uinta River and Beaver Creek drainages.

Exclusions

Excluded from the proposed High Uintas Wilderness are 35,792 acres now in the existing primitive area. (See map, page 6.)

Area 1 — 335 acres in Hayden Fork.

Area 2 — 180 acres in Duchesne River.

Area 3 — 910 acres in Stillwater Creek.

Area 4 — 34,367 acres in the Moon Lake Area.

PUBLIC RESPONSE

Persons interested in this proposal are urged to personally visit and view the proposed wilderness. Normally the area is accessible between July 1 through September 15, depending on snow conditions.

Interested individuals, representatives of organizations, and public officials wishing to express their views on this proposal are invited to appear at the public hearing to be held beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, October 12, in Room B-20, Federal Building, Salt Lake City, Utah.

Those not wishing to appear in person may submit written statements to the Regional Forester for inclusion in the official record. Such views must be submitted no later than November 12, 1966.

Any views presented as a result of this notice will be forwarded with recommendations of the Secretary of Agriculture to the President and to Congress.

Questions not answered by this brochure should be directed to one of the following:

Forest Supervisor
Ashley National Forest
Forest Service Building
Vernal, Utah 84078

Forest Supervisor
Wasatch National Forest
Federal Building
Salt Lake City, Utah 84110

Regional Forester
Federal Building
324 - 25th Street
Ogden, Utah 84401

THE HIGH UINTAS WILDERNESS·DESCRIBED

HISTORY

The High Uintas Primitive Area was established on April 27, 1931, under Secretary of Agriculture Regulation L-20. This regulation provided for a series of areas to be known as "Primitive Areas" within which primitive conditions of environment, transportation, habitation, and subsistence were to be maintained with a view to conserving the values of such areas for purposes of public education and recreation. The regulation prohibited certain types of occupancy and the construction of permanent improvements other than for administration. It also provided for continued use of roads and improvements in place.

The primitive area was named after the "Uintats" Indians who were mountain dwellers and a branch of the Ute tribe. The first recorded visit to this area by white men was in 1824 when a party from William Ashley's expedition trapped furs in the headwaters of Weber River, Bear River, and Blacks Fork.

On April 16, 1942, the Acting Chief of the Forest Service, under authority of Regulation U-3, eliminated 3,240 acres to accommodate the Duchesne tunnel, a feature of the Deer Creek Reclamation Project.

GEOLOGY AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONS

Elevations vary from approximately 8,000 feet in lower basins to 13,512 feet.

The setting for this proposed wilderness is the center of the Uinta Mountains uplift which gradually thrust up a stone block 150 miles long and 35 miles wide. In the eroding process, canyons, gorges, basins, and talus slopes of spectacular beauty have been created.

The Uinta Mountains rise somewhat gradually above the plateaus, then rise abruptly at the crest. Kings Peak, the highest in Utah, reaches an elevation of 13,512 feet. Every large canyon that heads near the crest of the range has been glaciated. The Uinta Mountains consist of a tan, rusty-weathering or rarely pale grayish-red quartzite, combined with gray, greenish, or reddish shale overlain with dark red to grayish-red shale.

Precipitation averages about 40 inches annually, largely in the form of snow. Heavy frosts can be expected every month and winter temperatures are extremely cold.

RESOURCES

Timber

Approximately 35 percent of the proposed wilderness supports heavy stands of timber, a major portion of which is located in the lower basins of Uinta River, Rock Creek, Moon Lake, Hayden Creek, and Grandaddy Lakes Basin. Engelmann spruce and lodgepole pine comprise approximately 96 percent of the total volume of commercial timber. The principal timber species are: lodgepole pine, Engelmann spruce, Douglas fir, and alpine fir. Other tree species are white bark pine, limber pine, white fir, quaking aspen, and small quantities of ponderosa pine, cottonwood, and mountain maple.

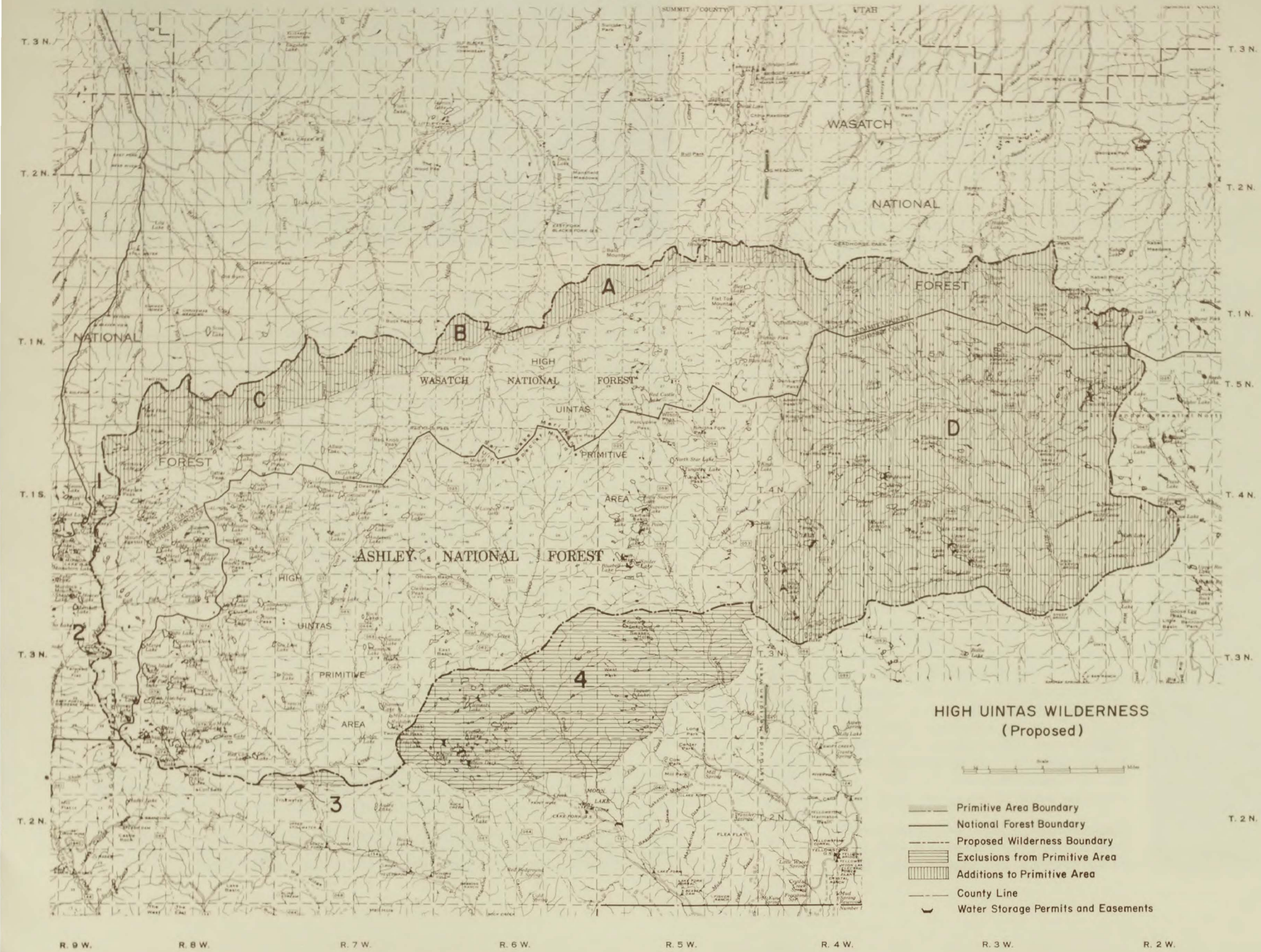
Approximately 118,150 acres with a volume of 697 million board feet are classed as productive Forest land. Little of this commercial timber is considered economically operable under current market conditions. Access in most instances is restricted by large, natural rock barriers which would cause very high road construction and maintenance costs. These same natural barriers add to the feeling of remoteness and challenge, thereby enhancing wilderness values. The timber is of great value in complementing magnificent scenery, wildlife habitat, watershed, and public use and enjoyment as wilderness.

Wildlife

The proposed wilderness provides summer grazing for elk, mule deer, moose, and mountain sheep. There is some fall hunting for moose, elk, and deer. Many fur bearers, rodents, and birds may be seen by the observant traveler. Fish are found in many streams and in over one-half the lakes that dot the area.

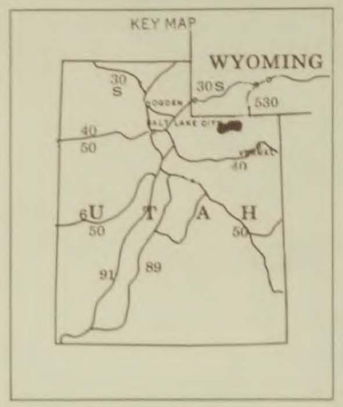
Water originating on lands within the proposed wilderness is of vital importance to the economy of nearby communities. The proposed wilderness will supply much of the water for the Ultimate Phase of the Central Utah Project.

Small storage reservoirs for irrigation represent the greatest evidence of man's activities. There are 14 natural lakes which have been raised for storage purposes. However, there are approximately 500 lakes left in their natural state.



HIGH UINTAS WILDERNESS
(Proposed)

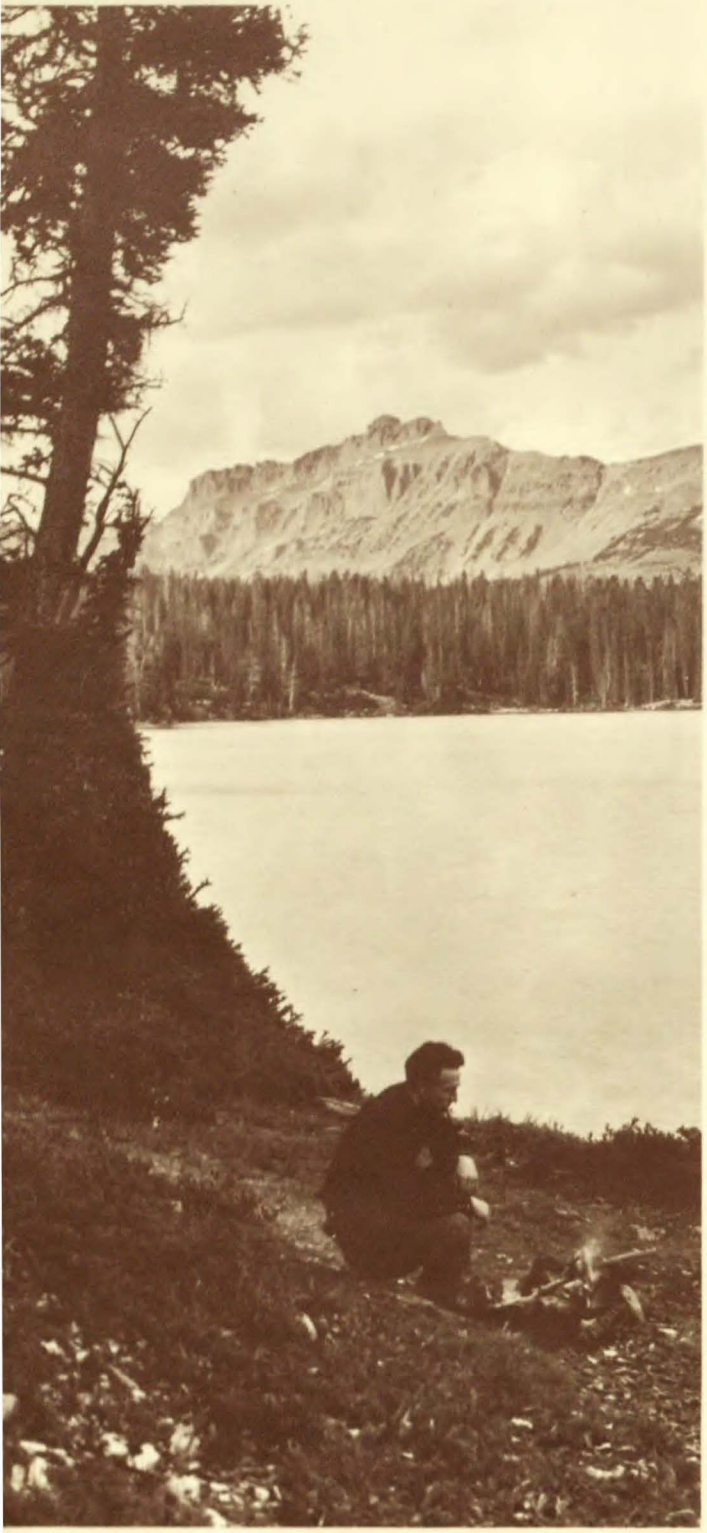
- Primitive Area Boundary
- National Forest Boundary
- Proposed Wilderness Boundary
- Exclusions from Primitive Area
- Additions to Primitive Area
- County Line
- Water Storage Permits and Easements



PROPOSED ADJUSTMENTS

	Acres
Additions	
Unit A Henrys Fork	5,011
Unit B East Fork	1,573
Unit C West Fork	13,018
Unit D Uinta River	102,011
Total	121,613
Exclusions	
Unit 1 Hayden Fork	335
Unit 2 Duchesne River	180
Unit 3 Upper Stillwater	910
Unit 4 Moon Lake	34,367
Total	35,792
Net Additions	85,821
High Uintas Primitive Area	237,177
Total Proposed for Wilderness	322,998
Duchesne County	
Ashley National Forest	215,216
Wasatch National Forest	13,909
Summit County	
Wasatch National Forest	93,873
Total	322,998

Additions and exclusions correspond to letters and numbers shown on the map.



Until the Ultimate Phase of the Central Utah Project provides alternate storage downstream and outside of the proposed area, the Forest Service will recognize the need to maintain existing water storage structures in a safe and usable condition. Maintenance activities will be conducted under stipulations which protect wilderness.

Minerals

There are no known mineral values and the proposed wilderness will have no known effect on the development of mineral resources of the state.

Forage

Domestic livestock grazing is important to the year-round ranching operations of the local people whose livestock are permitted to graze. The area, however, has a very short growing season, and the per acre forage yields are considerably lower than on good range sites at lower elevations. Less than 25 percent of the area is classified as suitable livestock range under present management. Some 34,067 sheep months and 659 cattle months use are made of this area each year. The grazing of domestic livestock will continue within the limits of the grazing capacity and in harmony with wilderness management.

Recreation

The High Uinta Mountains are outstanding for their superb mountain scenery and wilderness qualities. They are unique in that they constitute the highest range in Utah and the most prominent east-west range in the United States. The three highest peaks in Utah are located within the wilderness proposal and there are numerous peaks of more than 13,000 feet.

Ridges divide the area into large, scenic, independent basins interspersed with high glacial moraines and glacial drifts. The

floor of these basins is in spectacular contrast with the abrupt ridges which rise several thousand feet above them. It is rich in native species of grasses, grass-like plants, flowers, shrubs, and trees.

Timber stands add to the recreation, inspiration, and enjoyment of the wilderness visitor.

The more than 500 lakes scattered throughout the wilderness and the many high, rugged peaks provide unlimited opportunities for those interested in hiking, mountain climbing, taking pictures, fishing, hunting, or just enjoying beauty and quiet solitude.

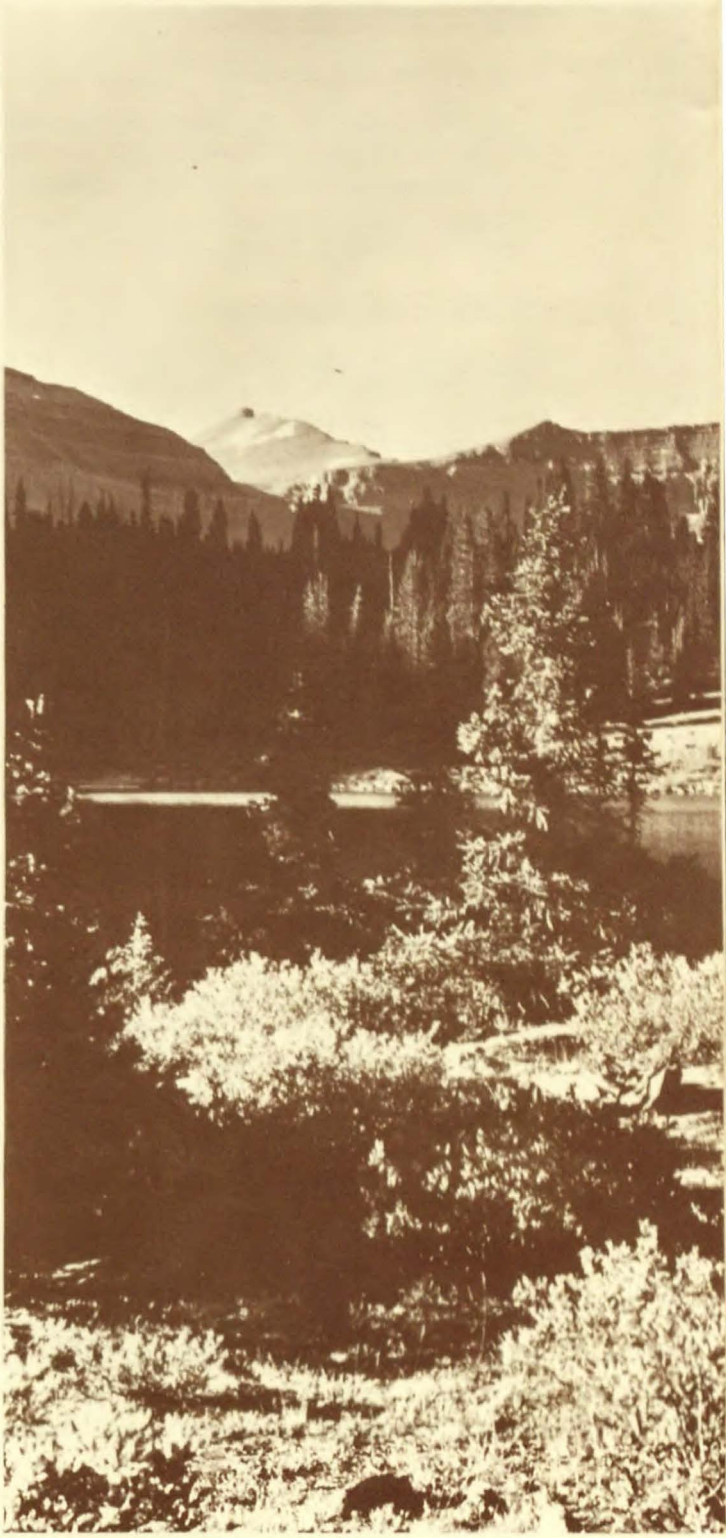
It is a wild, picturesque region, rich in scenic, geological, and biological interest and comprises the only sizable area suitable for wilderness within the National Forests of Utah. One-day trips from any entrance will provide a variety of enjoyable wilderness experiences. Trips of three days or more present the traveler with unexcelled scenery. Vistas change in short distances as do the geology and ecology. Although the proposed wilderness is one of outstanding scenic beauty, there are no natural features of such unique character that access by road is necessary to make them available to large numbers of people. Many adjacent areas now accessible by road have some of the same qualities of beauty and attractiveness.

Soils

The dominant soils are those developing on the mixed quartzite-shale moraines. The typical soil is stoney. It has a relatively low productive potential and is quite resistant to erosion.

LAND OWNERSHIP

All land within the existing primitive area as well as the proposed wilderness is National Forest.



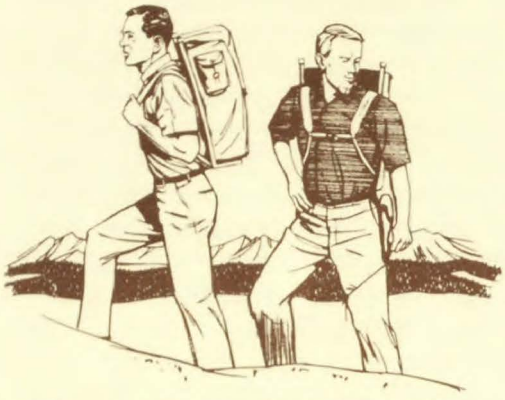
SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Fire, Insects, and Disease

The rate of spread and resistance to control of fire varies from medium to low and fire improvements are not planned within the proposed wilderness. Forest insects and disease are not a common problem in the high elevation stands, although in the past, insect outbreaks have extended into the area from lower elevations. It is not expected that disease control will be necessary.

Structures and Improvements

There are no administrative facilities or improvements within the proposed wilderness other than Forest Service trails and one small, fenced enclosure. Fourteen small irrigation reservoirs and six old cabins are within the area. All the cabins will eventually be removed by agreement with the owners. There are no hydro-electric power projects, roads, or other structures or developments within the proposed wilderness. The landing of aircraft or use of motorboats has not become established.



PROPOSAL

This proposal recommends that 322,998 acres located in the High Uinta Mountains be added to the National Wilderness Preservation System. The area to be known as the High Uintas Wilderness includes a major portion of the High Uintas Primitive Area and additional contiguous lands within the Ashley and Wasatch National Forests, Duchesne and Summit Counties, State of Utah. It extends along the divide of the western half of the High Uinta Mountain range for a distance of approximately 40 miles. On the south it includes the headwaters of the North Fork of Duchesne River, Uinta River, Rock Creek, Lake Fork, and Yellowstone Creeks. On the north the headwaters of Thompson Creek, Beaver Creek, Henrys Fork, East and West Forks of Smiths Fork, East, Middle, and West Forks of Blacks Fork, all draining to the Green River and the East Fork and Stillwater Fork of the Bear River drainage are within the proposed wilderness. This proposal establishes boundaries generally on well defined topographic features which are easily identified, includes areas outside the primitive area predominantly valuable for wilderness, and excludes those not suitable. The following is a summary of the proposed boundary adjustments. Additions and exclusions are shown by corresponding letters and numbers on the map, pages 6 and 7.

ADDITIONS

Area A — Henrys Fork — Blacks Fork, 5,011 acres.

This involves four areas located in the headwaters of Henrys Fork, Lake Hessie Basin, East Fork of Smiths Fork, and Little East Fork of Blacks Fork. The adjustment adds lands that are predominantly valuable for wilderness and places the boundary on logical ridgetops and drainages which can be described by physiographic features readily identifiable on the ground.

Area B — East Fork of Blacks Fork, 1,573 acres.

Area is valuable for its interesting wilderness qualities and is characterized by steep, rocky slopes with alpine tundra vegetation on ridgetops. Scattered timber, although of low commercial quality, adds to the wilderness character of the area. The proposed boundary follows ridgetops and is easily definable on the ground.

Area C — West Fork of Black Forks — Hayden Fork, 13,018 acres.

These additions include portions of the headwaters of West Fork of Blacks Fork, Left Hand Fork and Right Hand Fork of Bear River, and Ostler and Stillwater Forks. These lands have outstanding wilderness qualities. The country is characterized by rocky near-vertical canyon walls, bare rock dome structures, and numerous fault lines. The major portion of this area has been closed to livestock grazing due to lack of suitable range and low quality forage. The estimated 8 million board feet of timber is of poor quality and located on rocky ground. While increased demand and new harvest techniques may make its harvest feasible in future years, the timber has much greater wilderness value than the products that might be produced from it.

Area D — Uinta River — Beaver Creek, 102,011 acres.

This major addition is located on the north and south sides of the High Uinta Mountains in the upper Uinta River and Beaver Creek drainages. It is an important addition to the wilderness and entails minimum conflicts with established uses. This unit embodies many areas valuable for their scenic, recreational, scientific, educational, and geological qualities. The general direction of the scenic mountain range crest within this addition is also east and west and includes peaks of more than 13,000 feet elevation. The three highest peaks in Utah are located adjacent to or within this unit. The visitor is provided with a variety of beautiful scenery and outstanding opportunities to experience the solitude and inspiration of wilderness where the influence of man is substantially unnoticed. This is probably the largest remaining potential wilderness within the National Forests of Utah.

Approximately 38,000 acres are classified as productive Forest land with an estimated volume of 206 million board feet of commercial timber principally lodgepole pine and Engelmann spruce. The large, natural rock barriers, which would cause extremely high road maintenance and construction cost and which,

under present conditions, would make timber harvest economically infeasible, serve to enhance wilderness values by increasing the value of remoteness and inaccessibility.

There are nine lakes which have been dammed for reservoir purposes under authority of special-use permit or easement. However, over a hundred lakes remain in their natural state. Grazing by domestic livestock is of minor importance and available forage is limited due to thin soils and the short growing season.

The boundary of this addition is on natural physiographic features which are easy to recognize.

EXCLUSIONS

Area 1 — Hayden Fork, 335 acres.

This small area is recommended for deletion to eliminate conflicts with wilderness. Several small spur roads currently lead from the highway which is one-tenth mile away to the present primitive area boundary. The boundary is also adjusted to follow natural physiographic features.

Area 2 — Duchesne River, 180 acres.

This exclusion places the proposed boundary on Marsell Creek which is readily recognized.

Area 3 — Upper Stillwater, 910 acres.

Recommended for deletion to eliminate conflicts with the proposed Upper Stillwater reservoir which is part of the Initial Phase of the Central Utah Project. The backwaters of the reservoir will encroach upon the existing primitive area.

Area 4 — Moon Lake, 34,367 acres.

This unit does not possess the scenic or wilderness qualities for which the High Uintas are noted. The relatively gentle topography is not in keeping with the general character of the High Uintas. The existing primitive area boundary which crosses several drainages, as well as Moon Lake, will be eliminated.

Construction work, including road building, accomplished in connection with the building of dams across the outlets of several small lakes has destroyed much of the wilderness character.

In contrast to the timber in the areas proposed for wilderness, this area supports 24,200 acres of readily accessible commercial timber amounting to about 116 million board feet or an estimated potential of a million and a half board-foot annual harvest. The public values for timber production, developed recreation, water management, and other uses are greater than for wilderness.

Practically the entire area is within cattle allotments.

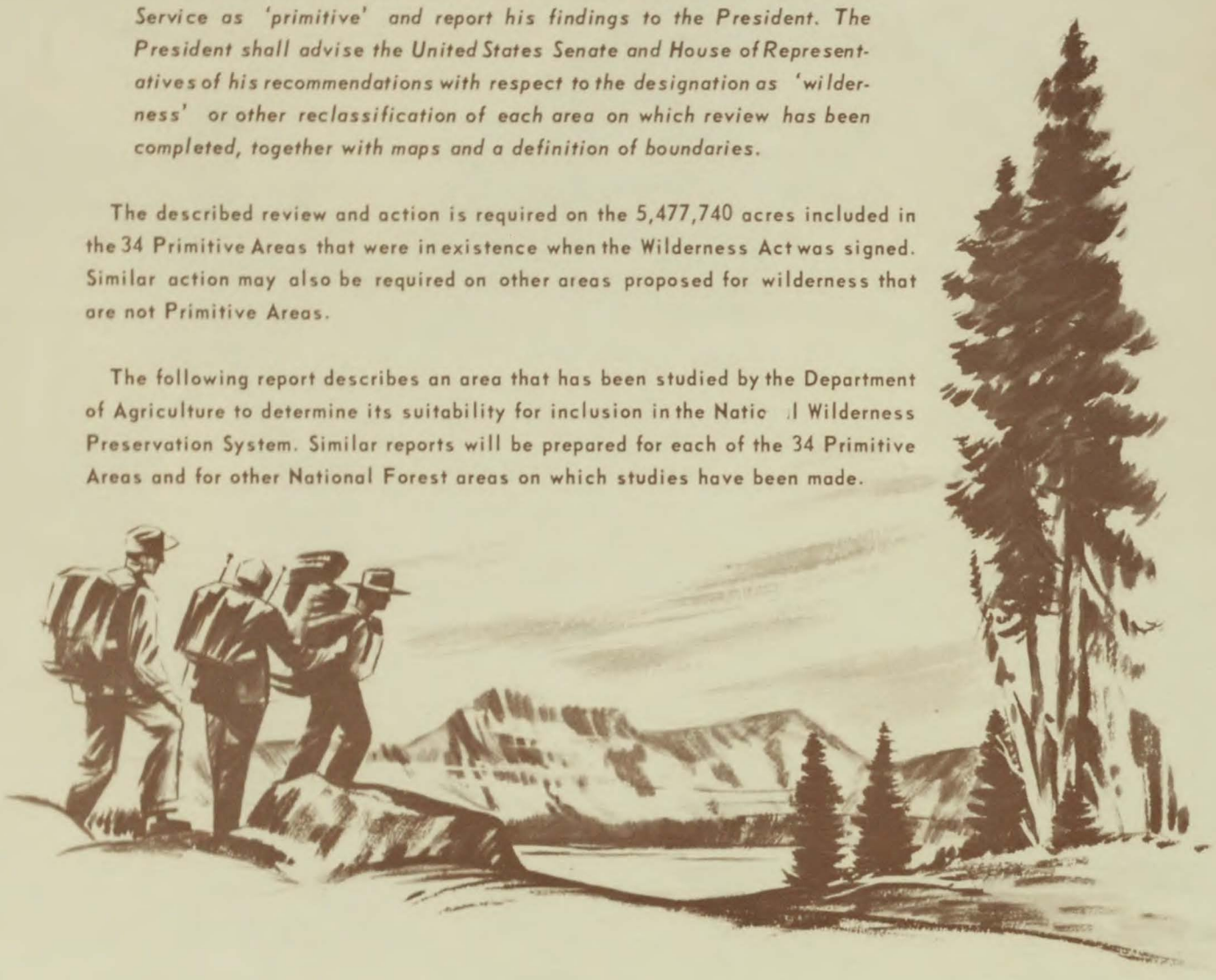
A Report on the Suitability of Certain National Forest Lands for Preservation as Wilderness

The Wilderness Act (Public Law 88-577) signed by the President on September 3, 1964, requires that:

> *The Secretary of Agriculture shall, within ten years after the enactment of this Act, review, as to its suitability or nonsuitability for preservation as wilderness, each area in the national forests classified on the effective date of this Act by the Secretary of Agriculture or the Chief of the Forest Service as 'primitive' and report his findings to the President. The President shall advise the United States Senate and House of Representatives of his recommendations with respect to the designation as 'wilderness' or other reclassification of each area on which review has been completed, together with maps and a definition of boundaries.*

The described review and action is required on the 5,477,740 acres included in the 34 Primitive Areas that were in existence when the Wilderness Act was signed. Similar action may also be required on other areas proposed for wilderness that are not Primitive Areas.

The following report describes an area that has been studied by the Department of Agriculture to determine its suitability for inclusion in the Natic .l Wilderness Preservation System. Similar reports will be prepared for each of the 34 Primitive Areas and for other National Forest areas on which studies have been made.



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